

# A PASTORAL LETTER

## ABOUT YOUR ABORTION DECISION



**Planned Parenthood**

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### PLANNED PARENTHOOD RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Reverend Debbie Pitney, United Methodist	Reverend Steve Carlson, Lutheran ELCA	Reverend Ken Henry Presbyterian
Reverend Ben Duke, Presbyterian	Reverend Melanie Coomes, Congregational-United Church of Christ	
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Reverend Jan Fairchild, Brethren	Reverend Bruce Cameron Presbyterian	Rabbi Yitzhak Husbands- Hamkin

## A PASTORAL LETTER

Dear Friend,

If you are reading this letter you are probably pregnant or close to someone who is. The people who have signed this letter below come from a variety of religious communities. Our purpose in writing this letter is to support you in whatever course you choose. The presence of the "religious right" has been very strong in its refusal to accept abortion as one of the choices before a woman. We represent religious traditions which all have different opinions about abortion, but we do have some basic understandings that we would like to share with you.

- We believe, as religious leaders in our faith communities, that abortion is a morally permissible choice for a woman facing a problem pregnancy. No one thinks abortion is an easy choice. If we lived in a perfect world there might be no problem pregnancies and therefore no difficult choices about abortion. We realize that there are many things that can make a pregnancy difficult. Abortion is chosen for medical, physical, emotional, economic and relational reasons. It is a choice made by women, often in consultation with partners, families and friends. We support you and your ability to choose what is best for you.
- We believe, as religious leaders in our faith communities, that ultimately no one can make the choice for or against abortion except the woman herself. No one knows your life as you do. We trust that any decision you make will be made after serious thought and contemplation of the alternatives. You will make the best decision you can. We do not believe that it is appropriate for other persons or other faiths to judge you or the correctness of your decision. God gave us all the ability to think and pray and feel and choose. We are called to make the best decisions we can in our personal circumstances. If you have thoughtfully decided to have an abortion then you should be at peace with your decision.
- We believe, as religious leaders in our faith communities, that the decision to have an abortion will not threaten your relationship with God. We believe that God is a participant in the struggles of human life. We believe that God is compassionate and does not expect any of us to lead perfect lives. We believe the biblical record shows us a God who loves human beings regardless of our strengths, skills and aptitudes, and loves us equally despite our failings, mistakes and choices. God is not angry with you and will not punish you for any choice you have or might make. In fact, we believe that God loves you and will be with you helping you find strength and understanding and comfort for living through days of doubt and distress.
- We believe, as religious leaders in our faith communities, that your life needs to go on from here, and that you are deserving of support and assistance. We know that the decision to have an abortion is a difficult one. You may wonder from time to time if you made the right choice. You may be sorrowful, doubtful or depressed because of

→ your choice. These are natural emotions. Experiencing this does not mean your decision was a bad one. It may mean that you are a sensitive person. Nevertheless these feelings may also mean that you could benefit from talking with someone about your decision. It is important for you to find peace. If you have bad moments, we encourage you to seek support from professionals. If you think that it would be helpful for you to talk to a minister, Planned Parenthood keeps a list of clergy who would be supportive of you and the decision you have made. They will see you for no charge and not pressure you to become part of their congregations. We want you to have a peaceful road ahead.

God Bless you!